



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



RICHARDSON MEETS HIS NEW TEAM

Bradley Richardson, recently named superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs, had the opportunity last weekend to tour the Veterans Home campus.

Although Richardson will not officially begin his duties until June 11, this visit gave him the opportunity to meet the staff, and be briefed on the status of projects and events at the Home.

Richardson was also briefed on the construction of the new veterans home by SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman.

Richardson and his family used this time to tour the hills and secure housing.

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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



STOUX FALLS VA HOSTS CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

This week the SFVAHCS hosted the “clothesline” project. The purpose was to offer a visual display that would raise awareness of the effect of military sexual trauma, sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Survivors of rape — men and women — decorated the T-shirts to reflect their experiences and call awareness to sexual trauma.

According to information shared through the VA, about one in five women and one in 100 men have told their VA health care provider they have experienced military sexual trauma, also known by its acronym, MST.

The VA believes this visual display is more likely to evoke the emotion needed to change people's thoughts and attitudes.

(Photo courtesy of Sioux Falls Argus Leader)



OPERATION RAV RECEIVES ENDORSEMENT FROM RAPID CITY JOURNAL

THE ISSUE: South Dakota's Veterans Affairs Department launched Operation Reaching All Veterans to contact the state's 75,000 veterans to let them know what benefits they are eligible for.

This week the Rapid City Journal endorsed the “Operation RAV” campaign!

Their endorsement stated: We agree and support the state Veterans Affairs Department's initiative to contact every veteran and let them know what benefits and programs their country owes them for their service.

To date over 13 open houses have been hosted by the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers, with 69 other events on the schedule and more to come. We forward, to the media each week, a list of the open houses that are scheduled for that week.

The media has been doing a great job of promoting our events and our efforts and we need to make sure we take the time to thank them for their support.



OUR VIEW: We owe our veterans for their service and support the state's effort to let every veteran know what benefits they are entitled to receive.

Eighth Annual

Greg Wagner Memorial Event

**Saturday May 10, 2014
Baseball Complex, Alexandria SD**

Walk/Run

Registration: 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Starts: 10:00 am

Early Bird Registration - \$30.00 - 5K/10K Walk/Run includes a Meal, T-shirt and free admittance into the Alex Angels Amateur Season Opener.

Registration - \$25.00 - 6K Walk includes a Meal.

Memorial Ride

Registration: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Starts: 1:00 pm

Early Bird Registration - \$30.00 - Memorial Ride includes a Meal, T-shirt and free admittance into the Alex Angels Amateur Season Opener.

Registration - \$25.00 - Memorial Ride also includes a meal.

Alex Angels vs Parkston Mudcats Amateur Baseball Season Opener

Starts: 5:00 pm

Admittance - \$5.00

All Day Package

Early Bird Registration - \$50.00

Registration - \$45.00

Early Bird Registration ends 4-15-14.

Registration Forms can be picked up at Campbells Supply
or go on line to register at allsportcentral.com

Proceeds will go to the
Wounded Warriors and Alex Amateur Baseball Program.

If you would like to be a Sponsor or
like more information please call 605-770-7630.

Visit us on www.facebook.com/gregwagnermemorial

*Angels on earth
walking for heros in heaven*

HEROES AMONG US

Sheldon Keith Bright, born in Onida in 1931, was raised on a small farm in eastern Sully County. Sheldon's mother passed away when he was four and his younger brother was two, leaving his father to care for the boys. The three of them eked their way out on an often fertile, sometimes barren prairie, where the highlight of their week was riding a wagon into the small town of Harrold as they munched on lard sandwiches.

Sheldon was working as a farm hand for the Nelson family when the Selective Service notified him in late 1951 that "his number had been drawn." Sheldon looked upon his impending Army enlistment as new challenge. In January of 1952, he, and two other Onida boys, LeRoy Goosen and George Mileusnich, set out to make a difference for their country. They were sent to Ft. Lewis, Washington for the requisite induction and boot camp periods, then loaded on a troop ship for further travel to Korea, where Sheldon was assigned to the 45th Infantry/101st Airborne.



The Army did challenge Sheldon, and gave him a concrete measure of himself. Although he didn't enjoy being hunkered down in cold, muddy foxholes while being shot at by the enemy, he gained great pleasure when his marksman skills were put to good use manning the .50 caliber machine gun, as he took out those same enemy emplacements. He served in-country Korea for 11 months.



After his tour overseas, Sheldon was released from the Army in October of 1953, and began a new life back in Onida. He married Helen Phares in 1954, and they had three children, James, Julie, and Jane. Active in the community, he joined the Jaycees, served a term on the Onida city council, and became a member of American Legion Post 79. Sheldon was commander of the Post for a number of years and brought notice to the town when he was chosen as the South Dakota Legionnaire of the year in 1958. For many years, Sheldon served on the Legion Post Honor Guard. He joined the Freemasons, attained the position of Worshipful Master of Lodge 173, and became a life member. He was also a life member of Onida Chapter #138 Eastern Star, member of the Onida Presbyterian Church, past president of Onida City Enterprises, and member and strong supporter of the NRA.

In 1959, Sheldon teamed up with another Korean War Veteran, "Butch" DeSautell, to form Onida Builders. The two men built many new homes in the immediate area for a number of years. The partnership ended in 1966, when he and Helen opened Onida Furniture, which later became Bright's Floorcovering. Together, the husband and wife team ran the business for over 40 years. They closed the store and retired in 2007. In 2009, Sheldon and Helen moved to the South Dakota Veterans Home in Hot Springs, where he passed away on February 19, 2011.



SDNG SOLDIERS TRAIN IN AFRICA

Five South Dakota Army National Guard members participated in a multinational exercise in Cameroon, Africa, last month to train and build relationships with U.S. military forces and African partner nations. As members of the 881st Movement Control Team, the soldiers provided logistics support to the exercise Central Accord 14, March 7 – 21, and were responsible for the management and preparation of cargo and personnel transported aboard aircraft throughout the country.

The two-week exercise included more than 1,500 troops from Cameroon, Chad, Burundi, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and the Netherlands, as well units from all branches of the U.S. military.



The Central Accord exercise allows African militaries that participate in the Multinational Force of Central Africa, or FO-MAC, to practice working with U.S. forces in an effort to strengthen defense capabilities and develop crisis response and peacekeeping forces. The goal of the U.S. Africa Command annual exercise is to improve FO-MAC's regional ability to command, control and support forward deployed forces and improve the interoperability of a coalition task force. Exercise participants run through a number of training scenarios which develop their ability to work together.

The 881st team was assigned to the New York Army National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade and were located in the port city of Douala, which served as a staging area for troops entering the exercise. The 369th, which served as the command element of Combine Joint Task Force Douala, coordinated the movement of troops participating in the exercise and also oversaw the shipment delivery of food, fuel, ammunition and other supplies.

To support the 369th's mission, the SDNG Soldiers provided their expertise in logistics and aviation operations to help prepare and move troops and supplies to different operating bases. The soldiers were chosen from several SDNG units for their ability to properly build cargo and prepare it for air transportation, accomplish load plans and to manifest passengers and create passenger listings.



PURPLE UP

Gov. Dennis Daugaard and SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman will visit John Harris Elementary School in Sioux Falls on Tuesday, April 15, to kick off "Purple Up for Military Kids."

During their visit, Gov. Daugaard and Secretary Zimmerman will officially launch the 2014 South Dakota "Purple Up for Military Kids" campaign during an assembly at 2 p.m. in the gym of the John Harris Elementary School.

Parents are encouraged to attend and wear purple in support of our military families. South Dakota communities, businesses and organizations are also encouraged to wear purple on that date, as a tangible way to show their support and thanks to all military children for their strength and sacrifices.

Established by Casper Weinberger in 1986, the Month of the Military Child recognizes the important role military children play in our communities.

"With over 7,500 military children in South Dakota, it is important that we honor these young heroes who have given so much," said Secretary Zimmerman. "Record numbers of National Guard, Army Reserve and other military parents living in South Dakota communities have been mobilized during the War on Terrorism. Community members, educators, friends and family are integral to a child's successful navigation of the deployment cycle."

PURPLE UP! FOR Military Kids Day

Started in 1986 by then Secretary of Defense, Caspar W. Weinberger

This month is set aside as a time to recognize and honor military children for their many sacrifices and struggles, as well as their countless contributions to our nation.

These kids are an inspiration and a source of pride, and it is fitting that we celebrate their spirits and commitments to our country

South Dakota's Governor, signs an Executive Proclamation, proclaiming April as Month of the Military Child, and special events and activities are held in honor of our military kids.

Our military children face many challenges before, during and after deployment of their loved ones.

Parental separation, increased responsibilities at home, and frequent moves, are just a few areas that military kids must navigate, like a complicated obstacle course.

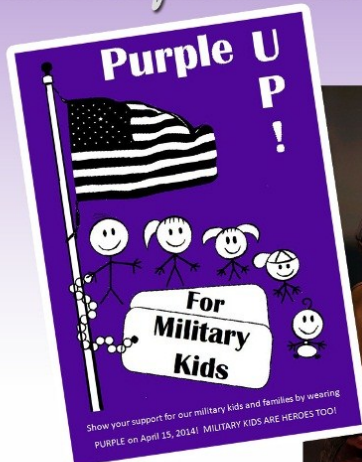
If given enough support to get through these tough times, our military children can come through with great resilience and confidence, ever ready to face other life changing events.

Our communities need to stand together and support our military families

Help make April a special time for the 7,500 military kids in SD

Remember, when parents serve in the military, their children serve too.

Thank them for their service to our country



**WEAR PURPLE
ON
April 15th**

ESGR CONGRATULATES SOUTH DAKOTA'S NOMINEES FOR 2014 FREEDOM AWARD

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense office, announced 18 South Dakota National Guard and Reserve members nominated their employers for the 2014 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is the Department of Defense's highest recognition for employers supporting employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. Up to 15 award recipients will be announced this summer and honored at the Pentagon in September at the 19th annual Freedom Award ceremony. Last year, recipients met with President Obama, who praised them for the exceptional support provided to their Guard and Reserve employees. Recipients also met with senior Defense Department leaders as part of the award recognition.

ESGR received 2,864 nominations nationwide during the nomination season. Even with troop drawdowns, service members continue to answer the call to duty, responding to ongoing national security demands and humanitarian relief missions. Nearly one-half of the U.S. military is comprised of Guard and Reserve members. Service members rely on civilian employment to provide reassurance and stability for these citizen-warriors and their loved ones.

"These employers exemplify the true spirit of patriotism," said ESGR National Chair Paul E. Mock. "By supporting their National Guard and Reserve employees, the 2014 Freedom Award nominees demonstrate what it means to serve our nation's citizen-warriors."

Freedom Award recipients are recognized for going above and beyond to support their Guard and Reserve members by not only safeguarding their positions, but establishing exceptional and generous initiatives that accommodate and care for employees and their families. This year's nominees represent employers large and small from nearly every industry, including airlines, grocery store chains, national retail brands and IT companies, as well as small businesses, and state and local governments. ESGR received nominations from Guard and Reserve members in all 50 states, Guam-CNMI, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. Semifinalists will be announced later this spring.

2014 Freedom Award Nominations from South Dakota:

Baltic School District, Baltic
Bel Brands US, Brookings
Sterling Computers, Dakota Dunes
Two Rivers Certified Tender, Dakota Dunes
Sanford Underground Research Facility, Lead
City of Lemmon, Lemmon
NorthWestern Energy, Mitchell
Pizza Ranch, Rapid City
DocuTAP, Sioux Falls
Lutheran Social Services Refugee & Immigration Center, Sioux Falls
Malloy Electric, Sioux Falls
Sammons Financial Group, Sioux Falls
SGT Inc., Sioux Falls
Wells Fargo, Sioux Falls
Black Hills State University Student Success Center, Spearfish
City of Spearfish, Spearfish
Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Vermillion
National American University-Watertown Campus, Watertown



Upcoming Events

2014

Apr. 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am
May 2-4—DAV State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Aberdeen
May 2-4—Vietnam Era Reunion—Deadwood Gulch—Deadwood
May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis - Veterans Club, 868 Main Street—10:00 am (MT)
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre - American Legion, 520 S. Pierre Street—10:00 am (CT)
May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings - City/County Building, 520 3rd Street—10:00 am (CT)
Jun 5-8—VFW State Convention—Custer
Jun. 19-22—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Jul. 7—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
Aug. 6—DOL Veterans Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



For a complete listing of the RAV Open Houses, please visit:

<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/upcomingevents.aspx>

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://mva.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

